

Claims

1. A method of facilitating a transaction between a merchant and a customer with a customer data storage device, the method comprising:

electronically storing a customer profile on the customer data storage device;

5 electronically communicating the customer profile from the customer data storage device to the merchant in conjunction with the transaction; and

electronically storing a record of the transaction on the customer data storage device.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the transaction comprises a retail purchase of a product, the method further comprising:

electronically communicating data regarding the transaction to a source of the product.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein electronically communicating data regarding the transaction to the source of the product comprises electronically communicating customer and product identification for product registration.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the customer data storage device comprises a card bearing a magnetic recording medium, and wherein electronically storing to the customer data storage device comprises writing digital data to the magnetic storage medium.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the customer data storage device comprises a portable electronic device having memory and a communication link, and wherein electronically storing to the customer data storage device comprises writing digital data to the memory via the communication link.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein electronically storing a customer profile further comprises storing at least one of a grouping consisting of a name, a residential address, and an identification number.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

reading the transaction record on the customer data storage device; and

reporting the transaction record.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the customer data storage device includes a plurality of transaction records, the method further comprising:

analyzing the plurality of transaction records for a pattern
5 of customer preferences; and
recommending a future transaction based on the pattern
of customer preferences.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

remotely maintaining at least a portion of the customer
profile and database of transaction records associated with the
customer profile on the customer data storage device; and
5 synchronizing the database of transaction records with the
customer data storage device in response to subsequent availability of
electronic communication between the database and the storage device
after an intervening transaction wherein a transaction record was stored
on only one of the database and the storage device.

10. A method of affecting purchase transactions of a subordinate person with a customer data storage device, the method comprising:

storing a controlled customer profile on the customer data storage device;

5 associating a financial credit identifier with the controlled customer profile;

electronically communicating the transaction limitation from the customer data storage device to the merchant; and

10 preventing authorization of the purchase transaction based on the transaction limitation.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

storing a transaction limitation in the controlled customer profile.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein electronically communicating the transaction limitation from the customer data storage device to the merchant is in response to presenting the financial credit identifier for a purchase transaction.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein storing the transaction limitation further comprises specifying an excluded merchant that is not authorized for purchase transactions.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein storing the transaction limitation further comprises specifying an included merchant that is authorized for purchase transactions.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein storing the transaction limitation further comprises specifying an excluded product that is not authorized for purchase transactions.

16. The method of claim 10, wherein storing the transaction limitation further comprises specifying an included product that is authorized for purchase transactions.

17. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

locking the controlled customer profile on the customer storage device;

unlocking the controlled customer profile in response to satisfaction of an access criterion; and

modifying the transaction limitation after unlocking the customer profile.

18. The method of claim 10, wherein the access criterion is an encryption key and locking the controlled customer profile comprises encrypting the controlled customer profile with the encryption key.